

Harford County Commission on Disabilities

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Meeting Minutes February 26, 2007

Attendance:

Members Present:

Amy Axel
Niki Biggs
Debbie Braam
Buddy Green
Kathy Halliday
Stacey Hull
Gil Kennedy
Joan Loftus
Laurie Kwiedorowicz
Marc Weinstein

Members Absent:

Susan Austin
Angela Barnett
Bob Coen
Councilman Guthrie

Helene Dubay, who has been selected as the Commission's recommendation to fill the vacancy in the category of "County Citizen who owns or operates a local business or who is an employee of a local business, "was also in attendance.

- I. Chairperson Buddy Green called the meeting to order at 5:12 p.m.
- II. Introductions: Commission members and visitors, including Helene Dubay, introduced themselves.
- III. Minutes: The minutes of the January 22, 2007 meeting were approved as presented.
- IV. Committee Reports:
 - A. Executive Committee:



Striving for a Better Way of Life for Harford County Citizens with Disabilities

1. Membership: Kathy Halliday reported that:
 - Amy Axel and Niki Biggs were approved by the County Council as members of the Commission;
 - A letter had been sent to Helene Dubay explaining that she had been selected by the Commission to fill the vacancy in the category of “County Citizen who owns or operates a local business or who is an employee of a local business”, but that her membership is not official until approved by the County Executive and the County Council; and
 - Rhia Perry, the Commission’s student representative for school years 2005 and 2006, has recommended a student with a disability to fill the student representative vacancy. Information on the Commission, the Annual Report, and a Board/Commission application will be forwarded to the student.
 2. Debbie Braam distributed copies of the Commission’s 2006 Annual Report. Marc Weinstein noted that his middle initial was incorrect in the listing of Commission members. The report will be corrected before it is posted on the Commission’s web page.
 3. The Commission voted to cancel its March 26, 2007 meeting to hold a retreat to review the 2007/2008 Strategic Plan. The purpose of the meeting is assign members to committees to accomplish the tasks in the plan. The retreat, **for Commission members only**, will be held on March 26th at 5:00 p.m. at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School” for Commission members only. A light supper will be provided.
- B. Accessibility Committee:
1. Ramps for Renters and Homeowners Program: No ramps have been constructed to date. Sharon Grzanka reported on a meeting held on February 2nd with Department of Community Services and Rebuilding Together staff to resolve issues. Following the meeting, a letter was sent from the Commission to Rebuilding Together re-emphasizing the importance of the involvement of the Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits, through the permitting process, to ensure compliance with appropriate codes. More to follow.
 2. Housing Coalition: No new information.

- C. Education Committee: Debbie Braam reported that the next Expo for Individuals with Disabilities will be held in March 2008. The planning committee has begun dialogue with Tim Kick, Facilities Manager, Mountain Christian Church, to request the use of the New Life Center for the Expo. More to follow.
- D. Government and Community Relations Committee
 - 1. Commission web page: Sharon Grzanka reported for Bob Coen, who could not attend the meeting. Bob proposed a "Focus on Commission Members" on the web page, with possible features including short bios of Commissioners, photographs, and email communication through the Department of Community Services. Members had questions and concerns about the proposal, which was tabled until Bob is available to provide more information.
 - 2. Legislative Committee: Laurie Kwiedorowicz provided the second legislative review of the Maryland General Assembly session and distributed the Commission's 2007 Public Policy Statement. See attached.
- IV. Disabilities Coordinator Report: No report.
- V. Old Business:
 - A. Transportation Steering Committee: No new information.
 - C. Harford County Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities:
 - Sharon Grzanka reported that with Niki Biggs' official appointment to the Commission, members of the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities are expected to appoint Niki as Co-chair of the Committee in accordance with the approved Memorandum of Agreement between the Commission and the Committee. The Memorandum outlines procedures to establish the committee as the Employment Committee of the Commission.
 - Niki Biggs reported that the Committee's Barrier Free Design Award will be re-written and proposed to the Committee for approval as the Accessibility Award. The Accessibility Award will recognize accessibility in community programs and/or services, including a local business. More to follow.

- VI. New Business: Buddy Green announced that, due to his on-going health concerns, he is stepping down from his position as Chairperson of the Commission on Disabilities and is not seeking re-appointment to the Commission. At his request, Sharon Grzanka read a copy of his letter to County Executive David Craig announcing his decision.
- VII. Public Comment and Announcements: Representatives of the law firm of Greenberg and Bederman announced a free seminar on Social Security disability benefits at the Harford Community College on Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. For more information and/or to register for the seminar, call 1-888-926-8583 or rdonoway@gblawyers.com .

These minutes are available in alternative format upon request.